

MODERNISM

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Modernism

WHAT IT IS

... AND ...

WHY IT WAS CONDEMNED

BY

C. S. B.

WITH A
FOREWORD
BY
J. R. GREEN

1908

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MODERNISM

“MODERNISM”—THE QUESTION

WHAT is “Modernism”? A few months ago the word was scarcely known in England. To-day it has assumed huge proportions. Within the past few weeks it has formed one of the staples of conversation in club smoking-rooms and drawing-rooms. It has left the semi-obscurity of the theological study, and wandered out into street and market-place. It has broken through the bonds of terms and technicalities, and clothed itself, to some extent at least, in ordinary words and phrases. The Press, secular as well as religious, has devoted much attention and space

to it. Leaders and letters, comment and criticism, platform lectures and pulpit sermons—these have given it sudden and wide publicity. And all this has followed on the solemn utterance of the Pope, Pius X., on the subject, conveyed to the “Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and other local Ordinaries” of the Church Catholic, in the form of an Encyclical Letter (*Pascendi Gregis*), dated from St Peter’s, Rome, on 8th September last.

Much ink has already, in this short space of time, been spilled in an undignified controversy as to the condemnation of “Modernism.” Personalities, at all times odious, have made themselves felt. Rough things have been said in public, and repeated at large. The merits of the question have crystallised around certain individuals. The tenets—whatever they may be—of “Modernism” have been affixed to certain names ; and our blame or sympathy extends itself from abstract doctrines to concrete persons. Such,

to a large extent, is the present state of the case.

But what, after all, is “Modernism”? It must have very great merits or very great “Modernism”—defects, to be the cause of such **The Word** a stir; to set the world by the ears in such a fashion. It must be a very bad thing to draw down upon itself the solemn condemnation of Rome, or a very good thing to find even a few defenders. Even its name has suggestions to give. It’s a good name—“Modernism”—a promising name. Modern things are likely to be good things. Most modern things *are* good. Why not “Modernism”? The very fact that the Pope has thundered against it, is in its favour. The Church of Rome is so hopelessly old-fashioned and out of date. On the other hand, and right or wrong, Rome has defined it as the synthesis of all heresies. That does not sound particularly as if it were altogether new. Heresies are old things—long-forgotten, for the most part, and very much

out of date—more so, far, than Rome herself. If “Modernism” really is a synthesis, a resuscitation, of all heresies, ancient and modern, then the name by which it is known is a very inept one to describe it. It is not a new thing at all; not modern at all; and it consequently has not that *prima facie* claim upon our allegiance that it seemed to have—whatever it meant. However, there is little, after all, in a name. Call it whatever you please, and it remains just what it was. If people choose to call themselves “Modernists,” the Pope is quite ready to fall in with their whim—and to condemn their teaching whatever they please to call it. The name is not of the Pope’s choosing.

What, then, is “Modernism”? It is a religion, a philosophy, a method of interpretation, a system of criticism. **“Modernism”**—
The Thing At first sight, it is only a new religion—or, better, a new way of explaining and accounting for the old one. It takes religion—the Catholic Church and its

teaching, for example—as it finds it in the world in this twentieth century. It accepts it as a fact, with all its doctrines and theology ; its sacred books and ritual ; its peculiar form of organization and management ; its belief and its discipline. Then it proceeds to apply its critical methods to all these things, and attempts to discover their meaning and their origin. It sets out to read what it finds written on the page of history in the new light cast by the philosophical principles that it has discovered. And it is in the result, rather than in the method by which it reaches that result, that its peculiar tendency is most striking. We shall set down, first of all, one or two of the conclusions to which it comes, and compare them with the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church. In the light of this comparison we shall easily be able to understand the radical antagonism between “Modernism” and Catholic teaching. Then we shall work back to the principles and

method that it employs : and we shall there discover that “ Modernism ” is not in reality so much a religion as a philosophical attitude ; that it is not so much a reasonable and reasoned account given of things as they are, as a critical application of sceptical principles to the whole of human knowledge ; that it not only issues in a denial of revealed religion, of any kind, and in every sense of the term, but in the destruction of all certainty in knowledge of what kind soever.

It must not, however, be supposed that “ Modernism ” can be found as a complete and finished system in any one work of any one “ Modernist.” It is to the Papal Encyclical that we must look for its statement and presentation, gathered together from the many writings in which, here one doctrine, there another, it is scattered. “ It is one of the cleverest devices of the ‘ Modernists ’ (as they are commonly and rightly called),” says the Encyclical, “ to present their doctrines with-

out order and systematic arrangement, in a scattered and disjointed manner, so as to make it appear as if their minds were in doubt or hesitation, whereas in reality they are quite fixed and steadfast."

The Roman Catholic Catechism used in this country contains a very great deal that is the common belief of all Christendom. If we omit

A Comparison the distinctly Catholic doctrines that it teaches, there is much left that would be fully acceptable to Christians of all denominations. For the most part, we shall confine ourselves to a comparison of this common Christian teaching with the conclusions of "Modernism." The result is striking.

For instance, the Catechism tells us that we are made by God. The first question is this:

i. God—how He is known Who made you? And the answer, plain and direct, is this: God made me. This is the teaching of the Church to the soul of the little child into whose hands the Catechism is put. But if that child should ask the

Church, as grown-up people ask : How am I to know that what you are telling me is true ? How am I to be sure that God made me ? The Church replies : You are to know for certain that God made you because it is a truth that can be discovered by the reason of man.¹

You are, moreover, to know this truth certainly—because God Himself has revealed it to the human race, speaking by His prophets and by His Son. This He has done not because it is by any means impossible to find Him by unaided human reason, but because it

¹ Concil. Vaticanum. Sess. III. Cap. 2 : The same Holy Mother Church holds and teaches that God, the beginning and end of all things, can be certainly known by the natural light of human reason, from the things that are created ; for the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (Rom. i. 20) ; but that it has pleased His divine wisdom and goodness to reveal Himself and the eternal decrees of His will to the human race in another, and that a supernatural way, according to the words of the Apostle : God having spoken on divers occasions, and many ways, in times past, to the fathers by the prophets : last of all in these days hath spoken to us by his Son (Heb. i. 1, 2).

is not always and for all men an easy search.

Ask the same question, on which all religion and the reasonableness of all religion in the last resort depends, of "Modernism." What is its answer to the question, Who made you? It will answer, doubtless: God made me, in the immemorial formula of Christianity. But push the question home. How am I to know that God made me? What guarantee have I that what you say is true? And "Modernism" makes answer: You cannot know certainly that God has made you, because you cannot go beyond the facts of your experience in science and history. You have never had any scientific experience of God, and you must not jump to the conclusion that there is any God at all from the facts of science. If there are any historical records that seem to tell you about God, they are not, strictly speaking, true: for the state of science then was not so promising as it is

How
"Modernism"
makes
God known

now ; and we are unable to infer God from nature now.

So far the answer of “Modernism” to a very simple question is not very helpful. But it continues: If you look into your heart you will find there a need, an aching need, of something that you cannot find in all nature. You will find there, also, a sense that reaches out beyond the boundaries of science and history into the region of the Unknowable, into which the reason cannot penetrate, and unites itself to God. For He is present in the heart as the object of this special sense, and as the cause that brings it into being. You must rest there ; for there your religious experience comes to an end. If you wish to *say* things about this God, whom you have reached in the sentiment of this sense of the heart, you must try to translate your experience into words. And, though you may, perhaps, manage to make some fairly intelligible statements about Him, as He is in your experience, whatever you

say will be not only inadequate, but in a sense false.¹

Such statements are mystifying, and hardly touch the question that was asked. Perhaps it is impossible for "Modernism" to answer it at all. Certainly it is, on its own principles. For God is no more than an immanent, or indwelling, something in the heart, creating and bringing into play this mysterious religious sense, and satisfying the vague need of the divine. What He is, apart from this, it would appear impossible to say. According to "Modernism," science cannot tell us ; history cannot tell us ; even the religious sense cannot tell us whether He is the Creator of the world or not--whether we are His handiwork or not. On the contrary, one of the prime tenets of "Modernism," pushed home to its logical conclusion, would bid us to believe that God

¹ Cf., on the other hand, St Thomas : *Contra Gent*, Book I. Chapter 4. Concil. Vaticanum. *de Revel.* If anyone says it is not possible or not expedient that man be taught, through the medium of divine revelation, about God and the worship to be paid Him, let him be anathema.

did not make us, in any understandable use of the phrase, for the very simple reason that, being immanent in us, as in all Nature, we *are God*.¹

A second question and answer of the Catechism are the following. Who is Jesus ^{2. Christ—The God-Man} Christ ? Jesus Christ is God the Son, made man for us. Here there is no necessity of going beyond the plain meaning of the words themselves. They are obviously stating a doctrine, held by Christians, as a fact of history. That there was a person who lived and played a part on the historic stage of the world ; that this person was, and is, God the Son, become incarnate, clothed in human flesh, subjected to the exigencies of human circumstances ; that this historic personage, who, the Catechism further goes on to state, is truly man, was always, and is, truly God, because

¹ Certain Modernists assert that God is both immanent *and* transcendent, and thus apparently escape the conclusion above drawn.

He has one and the same nature with God the Father, born of the Father from all eternity, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity ; that the historic appearance of this Eternal Person upon the stage of the world, in the semblance of man, is a definite fact, assignable to a definite historic period : is the doctrine of the Incarnation. It is the central doctrine of the Catholic Church, from which radiate all other Christian doctrines as light beams from the sun. Without it, and without its historic truth, there is no place for Christianity in the world. If the man Jesus Christ, who, as history tells us, with great circumstance, lived and taught in a certain part of the world and during a certain number of years, who was born of Mary in Bethlehem and suffered the capital punishment of crucifixion under the governorship of Pontius Pilate at Jerusalem, was not, as a matter of fact, what he claimed to be—what the Christian Church has always asserted him to be—then, indeed, Christianity

as a whole is a myth and a sham ; and the sooner we rid ourselves of its preposterous claims the better.

But how does “Modernism” answer this second question ? More incoherently, if possible, than it answered the last.

Christ

There are, it tells us gravely, to be distinguished two Christs. There is the historic person, the Christ who really lived and died in Judea. He was a man, like any other man. Nothing that he said, since he was but a man, could rise above the human. Nothing that he did was other than what man can do. As to any recorded revelations made by him of supernatural truth, any recorded works of his that transcended the powers of Nature, any miracles, in short—as to his birth of a virgin and his resurrection from the dead—these things are pure myths. They never happened. They could not have happened. History ignores them as the pious embroideries wrought over the simple narrative of fact :

that there was once a man of, perhaps, choice spiritual intuitions, and of high moral nature, a man whose consciousness of the activity of his religious sense was very great and intense, but no more. But, on the other hand, and holding all the time that the historical person, Christ, was in reality no more than has been just set down, “Modernism” proceeds to say that there is another Christ—the Christ of faith. This Christ of faith is no real historic personage, for history cannot recognise the supra-human and the miraculous element that He possesses. As there is in us, so, being a man of the highest religious and moral nature, there was in the historic Christ, a something divine. That divine spark of the Godhead immanent in him is recognised by our faith as akin to itself and expanded slowly into the full conception of the God-Man that the Church proclaims to us. By a gradual expansion on the part of our faith we come to read into his character that which historically was never there. We attribute to him

a knowledge that he never really possessed, and credit him with the performance of works that he never wrought. So by degrees faith has overlaid the historical truth with a multitude of detail that it has itself created ; and thus has originated and developed the Christ of faith.

To the plain man, accustomed to think in plain terms and to avoid misunderstandings, such a procedure can bear with it but the stamp of unreality and falsehood. He will brand this construction of a Christ of faith as a tissue of lies. To call a man, a historic man, who was no more than a man, God, is a lie. To overlay the human reality with the pious myths of an exalted religious sentiment is to falsify, not to construct. “If this is a true account of Christ,” he will say, “then Christ I cannot worship. I shall rather conclude in accepting your Christ of history, and accepting no more than that.” For the actual Christ of history, for the plain-thinking man, either He was God or

was not. If not God, then no process of evolution or development upon the part of the faithful could ever make him so. And it is as vain to lay stress on the exigencies of "faith" as upon the "needs" of the heart —for neither the one nor the other can alter facts nor transmute the purely human into a divine object of worship. But all this colossal supposition of the work of faith upon the human Christ of history is necessitated by the fact that "Modernism" finds it necessary to offer some explanation of the existence of belief in Christ as God. The belief is in the world. It is the cardinal factor in the life of millions. Whence did it come?

The Church points to its own unswerving tradition and to its written documents to explain the belief. It reiterates, with what must seem to the world a wearisome persistence, its central dogma: Jesus Christ is God the Son made man for us. It states the fact: to the Jews "God hath made him Lord and Christ," this same Jesus, whom you

have crucified" (Acts ii. 36); to the world, in the creeds, councils, and canons, from the beginning until now. Its tradition on the point is unbroken. Its sacred Scriptures bear it further witness.

But in that contention lies the root objection of "Modernism." The Scriptures, the ^{3. Holy Writ} Bible, is a fallible book. The facts related in the Gospels, for instance, are not historically true. The divinity of Jesus Christ cannot be demonstrated by an appeal to the sacred writings, for these themselves, even, are inaccurate and historically false.

Now the doctrine of the Christian Church on this point is unwavering and positive. After reciting the names of the Books of the Canonical Scriptures, the Council of Trent anathematises those "who do not receive as sacred and canonical the whole of these books, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and are con-

tained in the old vulgate Latin edition.”¹ And the anathema is pronounced for this reason, that God is the author of both the Old and the New Testament.² This has been the teaching of the Church from the beginning. It is traceable up through the records of councils, condemnations, professions of faith, to the statement of the Council of Toledo (447): “If any one should have said or believed that the God of the Old Law is not the God of the Gospels, A.S.”³ It appears in Holy Scripture itself. It is hardly necessary to insist upon a fact that is so obvious to the world.

What is the principle that has allowed “Modernism” to stray so far from Christianity?

“Modernism” Why must it, to explain the fact and the Bible that there is any religion in the world to-day, have recourse to a non-natural, non-intellectual theory of its origin? Why, to account for the supreme position that Christ

¹ Concil. Trident. Sess. iv. *Decretum de canonicis scripturis.*

² *Ibid.*

³ Conc. Tolet.

occupies in all the Creeds, in all the worship, in all the thought and life of the Chruch, must it shun the light of reason and drag in factors of knowledge from the non-rational part of man's nature ? Why, finally, must it shy at the history of Jesus set forth in the New Testament, pick and choose what little it will be pleased to accept, and relegate to the realms of myth and fable all that it, in its wisdom, sees fit to reject ?

The principle of choice has already been alluded to. It depends upon the limitation of

The Agnos- the sphere of reason, by "Modern-
ticism of ism," to the phenomena presented
"Modernism" to our senses. These we are un-
able to transcend. We can know what
we perceive—what we see, hear, taste,
smell, touch. These things, according to
"Modernism," are palpable facts, and the
only facts. What they mean, what lies
behind them, is a sealed book to us. Facts
we can group together and classify. We
are able, by observing them, to generalise

the laws of Nature from the particular instances in which we find those laws obeyed. But our knowledge is limited to this. It has no power to overstep these limits. It has no right to try to do so. Knowledge is bound down to the phenomenal. Science is content with these bonds, and does not attempt to stray beyond the forbidden barriers. Beyond, there is a vast field—of reality, possibly, and of truth ; but it is unknowable. The human mind cannot penetrate into the inscrutable obscurity of that vast region.

This doctrine has a familiar ring to it. It seems that we have heard it before, that it is no new discovery of “Modernism.” Herbert Spencer said something very like it. His agnosticism is not so unlike that of the “Modernists.” Huxley, if we mistake not, is their doctrinal ancestor, as is Kant of Huxley, and Hume of Kant. But this is not religion. Neither is it science. It is a sceptical philosophy—a scepticism and a philosophy to which the world pays little

attention, for the simple reason that it has a philosophy of its own.

It is all very well for the philosopher to elaborate systems in the quiet of his study,

The Philosophy of the Sane Man
to spin the gossamer webs of speculation, as the German is said to have spun the camel, from his inner consciousness. The world

will have none of it. There is a natural philosophy, inherent as it were in the mind of man, which teaches him to distrust these highly elaborated systems. His philosophy is enough for his everyday life and its needs. He relishes the apple that he is eating, without any misgivings as to the fact whether he has an apple really in his hand or not. The natural power of his intelligence and common-sense carries him beyond the vision of its red cheek or the savour that pleases his palate. When he wants another apple he does not seize indiscriminately upon anything that is red or green. He would not make the mistake of trying to eat a child's

painted rubber ball. For him, the apple is something real—and rightly so. It is the real apple that is rosy, and sweet, and palatable. Let philosophers explain away as they will, and put forward any account of reality they may choose, his philosophy is better than that of them all. He transcends experience and seizes upon the reality behind them.

For the man of common-sense and native logic, in his everyday life, while he may not consciously be using the terms and expressions of any particular system of thought or school of philosophy, as a matter of fact, does transcend his sense-experience and perceive the realities that lie behind it. Tell him, try to persuade him, that an apple is not an apple, that it is no more than a bundle of sensations, and he will call you a fool for your pains. He knows perfectly well—as do all philosophers, even when they profess the contrary—that there is a reality in his hand, out of which he is taking bites. He is

as certain as he is of his own existence that he is not eating redness, or tasting sweetness, or swallowing bits of roundness—but an apple. For him, it is the apple that is red, and the apple that is round, and the apple that is sweet. And, as it is true for him, so it is true for anyone who takes the trouble to think.

Moreover, having quite naturally, and probably quite unconsciously, and certainly without any necessary use of the terms substance, or reality, or accident, or quality, got at the ideas, he goes on in the same entirely natural and reasonable manner to other notions, such as that of causality. And he ends by possessing, expressed or latent in his mind, a whole system of related realities that lead up to the ground and cause of them all.

So, without artificial and arbitrary philosophies, he gets behind the tricks of philosophical “Modernists,” as well as theological ones, and will have none of them. “Truth and honesty,” he says, “at any cost. I have to live; and my philosophy, whether I take

the trouble to formulate it or not, must be capable of sustaining my life in its everyday needs. It, like my religion, if I am to have any, must be reasonable, straightforward, practical. It must come home to my mind before I can accept it as true. I am not going to take a leap in the dark. If I seem to be doing so always in my ordinary affairs it is because, as a matter of fact, I am quite confident in the natural truth that I possess and do not need to worry about it."

And so the ordinary individual who has a grain of common-sense in his make-up is as ready as Pius X. to condemn the wholly artificial word-weavings of "Modernism." If religion has any claim upon him, it must make its proper address to human reason. It must show its credentials. It must be a religion of the intelligence as well as of the heart ; and of the intelligence before the heart, and the heart through the intelligence. For how can he act upon anything before he knows it ? The supposition is preposterous.

Of course we do not mean to imply that for each and every individual man there must be a cut-and-dried set of proofs handy by means of which he can point out the road from his first experiences of sensation, and his first general principles of knowledge, to the conclusions of natural theology ; and then on, by means of a rationally established revelation, to the truths of the Christian faith. But it is maintained that, without the possibility of a rational and straightforward account being possible as to how one natural truth leads to another, without reasonable evidences—evidences that appeal to the intellect—of the fact of a supernatural revelation having been given, without a knowledge gained in some clearly verifiable manner, as to the contents of such a revelation, both natural and revealed religion are impossible and absurd—as far as we are concerned.

Let us again revert to “ Modernism ” and its principle of choice—agnosticism—in the selection of the facts that it is willing to

accept on the testimony of science and history. According to this its fundamental basis, we are only capable of knowing natural phenomena—things that appear, and in the manner in which they appear, as the Encyclical most appositely notes. Now, the regularity and permanence of the similar phenomena that we observe in the world, certainly do lead us to the conclusion that the operations of Nature are ever the same ; that, given certain antecedents, we must expect certain consequents ; that what we call effects are to be attributed to invariable causes. This conclusion, such as it is, recognised by science and by philosophy, we hold with absolute certainty, in all the events of Nature, because it is the result of uniform observation and experience. The philosophy, however, that lies at the root of “ Modernism ” is not content with this truth as it stands. Besides asserting this uniform experience, which is affirmative, it proceeds to add to it a negative assertion that can in no way be derived either

from observation or from experiment. And that is, that nothing can be the object of experience that is not accountable for on purely natural grounds.

Thus, quite arbitrarily, it shuts out, before really considering it at all, the possibility of ^{The} ^{Miraculous} what we call the miraculous. On this principle, whatever is, or appears to be, must be reckoned as purely natural in its nature, the production of natural laws, and explainable by natural causes. If there is anything in our own observation, or in that of others as handed down to us in history, that appears to be inexplicable on such grounds, it is our duty to strip from it all those circumstances of the miraculous with which it may be clothed and reduce the fact underlying them to the purely natural. For *a priori* the miraculous is impossible.

Such a method of procedure with regard to history—and it is in this subject that “Modernism” finds itself most at home,

leads to the inevitable result that all those accounts in the sacred Scriptures with regard to the foretelling of the coming of the Christ and its fulfilment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth must be rejected as pure invention. All the accounts of His life, teaching, and works, are to be stripped bare of the circumstantial detail with which eye-witnesses clothed them. The superhuman element is to be got rid of, whether in doctrine or in recorded miracle. And Jesus of Nazareth is to stand out from the mass of debris that this sceptico-critical process has torn from Him, a man like ourselves and no more.

It is to be observed that, were the process of the "reconstruction of history," that has just been described carried on in obedience to any certain principle, or even upon a highly probable hypothesis, it might be an exceedingly useful one for helping us to an accurate knowledge of past facts. But it is neither of these things. As was pointed out, it is a purely arbitrary and wholly foundationless

philosophical assertion. Its truth, it is obvious, must rest on evidence ; and of its evidence there is none forthcoming. On the contrary, there is much evidence against it.

The case stands thus. For “Modernism” : All scientific evidence points to the fact that

the laws of nature are invariable.

**Is Evidence
in favour of
“Modernism”
or not?**

Therefore, everything that happens or has ever happened, has taken place in obedience to those laws.

But what takes place according to natural laws is itself natural, and can be accounted for naturally. Therefore, the miraculous is impossible, does not, never did, and never will happen. And therefore, again, whatever in history comes to us with the stamp of the supernatural must be set aside as worthless and reduced to the condition of the purely natural before we can accept it.

Against “Modernism” : Though there is evidence of the regularity of the laws of Nature, and a consequent generalisation that those laws are invariable, there is also evi-

dence to the existence of the miraculous. And, if the laws of Nature are known to us by evidence, so is the miraculous. The evidence, in both cases, is of the same nature.

If we have come to the scientific conclusion that natural laws are invariable because of invariable experiences, one single experience to the contrary will upset that whole conclusion and force us to reconstruct our theory of Nature by allowing a place for the supernatural. And, as a fact, countless experiences of the supernatural come to us on the strength of evidence, as ingenuous and as straightforward as that by which even natural laws are established. Consequently whatever may, or may not, be the probability of direct interference, on the part of the Creator of Nature, with the laws that He has established, it is a most uncritical and unscientific handling of history to refuse to examine its testimony on the *a priori* ground that the facts related are impossible.

This historical canon of "Modernism" is

but an echo of the scepticism of David Hume, who declared that it is more probable that human testimony should err than that there should be an exception to natural law. The root fallacy of this has so often been exposed by thinkers of all schools that it is hardly necessary to expose it again here. Of what advantage beating a dead horse? Yet the very basis on which the knowledge of the laws of nature rests is of just so much strength as, and no more than, that upon which the knowledge of the occurrence of the miraculous rests—for it is the same.

With such an absurdly unphilosophical canon, or rule for interpreting history, “Modernism” proceeds gaily to deny all that Christianity affirms concerning the intervention of God in the affairs of man. And then, having destroyed its foundation, in order to bring religion into touch with reality once more it invents the “sense” of the heart to create an object for belief and worship, beyond the sphere of human know-

ledge, in the boundless abyss of the Unknowable.

Thus, having reduced the real Christ to a mere man—"the only man," as a non-Catholic "Modernist" has gone so far as to admit—it takes away from Him His knowledge that He was God; and that He was the Redeemer of a fallen humanity. It makes the doctrines that He taught no more than the imperfect human expression of the sentiments awakened in His heart by its contact, through the "religious sense" with the divine Unknowable. It denies that He really worked miracles—that the accounts of His opening the eyes of the blind, and making the lame to walk, and healing the lepers, and raising the dead, are more than the pious frauds of religiously inclined souls whose faith led them to falsify history. It eliminates the essential meaning and reality of the sacramental system by declaring that, according to its canons of criticism, the man Christ never instituted the

The Character, Knowledge, and Power of Christ

sacraments. It discovers that He had no idea, or intention, of establishing a Church to perpetuate His teaching and ministry. And, finally, what is more pertinent to Catholics—and it must be borne in mind that the “Modernism” against which Pius X. has raised his voice, is a “Modernism” that seeks to reform the Catholic Church—it contradicts the whole teaching of Catholicity with regard to its own organic nature, by making all spiritual authority come from the people, and not directly from God.

Now, as on those already dealt with, on these points also the teaching of the Catholic Church is peculiarly definite and explicit. Christ was, and is, God the Son made man for us. He knew that He was God, and that His work was the redemption of the fallen race. His teaching was a revelation, in which God’s truth was committed to man for his uplifting and salvation. His miracles were facts, and were worked in direct attestation of His Divinity. He and He alone instituted

the sacraments as visible signs possessing the character of conveying God's grace to souls. He intended to found, and did found, a corporate body or church, to perpetuate His teaching throughout the ages, to minister in His name to all peoples, to be His witness and His organ in conveying His redemptory merits to individual souls. That Church which He Himself established exists, and will exist for all time. Its power and authority come from Him and from no other. It is theocratic and not democratic. All these truths are contained in the perpetual teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church. All are recorded historically in the books of the New Testament. Every Catholic priest must teach them ; and every Catholic priest or layman must accept and hold them as divinely true.

Whatever view may be taken of "Modernism" and "Modernists" by the non-Catholic world, one thing is abundantly plain to the most casual observer. The men who profess

Honesty of the "Modernists" the subversive doctrines of "Modernism" may be right or they may be wrong, but in professing them, and at the same time calling themselves Catholics, or even Christians, they are acting dishonestly. There is nothing so distasteful to the average Englishman as dishonesty, deceit, and untruthfulness. "Modernism" is incompatible with the faith of the Catholic. The only way to excuse "Modernists" of the hateful charge is to suppose that their consciences are not as those of other men, that they have lost all sense of proportion and of truth in the maze of scepticism into which they have wandered.

Revelation There is another count upon which "Modernism" comes into violent collision with the Church. This point will, perhaps, not be so apparent to non-Catholics as the foregoing ; but it may be made sufficiently clear to be understood.

The Church asserts, and history and Scripture bear that assertion out, that in the

teaching of Christ a revelation was given from God to man. She further teaches that this revelation was committed to her keeping, to be preserved intact, and to be taught, as it was received by her, to the whole world. The Gospel of Christ, the truths that He taught her, she calls the "deposit of faith," and she confesses herself unable to make any alteration in it. It is not her message to the world. It is Christ's. She may not add to it, neither may she take away. At most, she is able, and indeed commissioned, to explain it. This has been her attitude with regard to the divine trust committed into her care from the beginning. As St Paul wrote, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a Gospel to you beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema" (Galatians i. 8). So the Church protests.

From this, two things are patent. The first is the claim of the Catholic Church that a divine revelation has been given to man

from outside ; and that the contents of this revelation are truths addressed to the reason and intelligence. The second is the confession that the Church has no power to alter the meaning of the intellectual truths thus conveyed.

What then of the development of dogma ? It is well known that, in the course of the centuries, dogmatic definitions have been added to the original store. Is not this an addition made to revelation ? Has not the Church overstepped the limits of her power as she herself lays them down, and preached a gospel beside that which she at first preached ?

Development of Doctrine

The Church answers, No. Her gospel is the same to-day as when it was given into her keeping. The development of doctrine, which she admits, is an internal development. It is a process in virtue of which the original dogma becomes more clearly and more exactly expressed. As statements running counter to its meaning are made, the Church

steps in to condemn them. Thus, certain aspects that *might* have been possible interpretations of the meaning of the original, are shut off. And, on the contrary, as statements unfolding the full meaning of the dogma are made and elaborated, bringing out its fuller significance and its harmony with other dogmas, the Church confirms them and states that they are true expressions of what she has received from God.

The implications of the original formulas in which revealed truth was expressed are worked out in detail, and the truth of the formulas by which this detail is stated depends upon their coherence with the previous ones and the absolute inclusion of theirs significance, in the original revelation as received by the Church. There is no addition of new fact or truth of human origin implied, no diminution or taking away of the divine.

But here “Modernism” is in, if possible, a more radical opposition to the immemorial teaching of the Church than elsewhere. Hav-

ing got rid of any possible revelation to man from outside, by falsifying the records of sacred history on its *a priori* arbitrary critical principle, and set up a Christ who never really existed as an object for worship, it proceeds to find the development as well as the origin of dogma, in the elaborations of reason upon the vague data afforded by its mystifying “religious sense.”

The starting point, as we have seen, is the “need” of the heart, yearning out towards the Unknowable. The blind “sense” then experiences a sort of contact with God. God does not speak to the intelligence, conveying a truth ; but acts on the heart, producing a feeling. Here, for “Modernism,” is revelation. Here, in this experience, or feeling, of God, it begins and ends. There are no truths given which are capable of development or evolution, only a religious experience in the depths of the heart.

But, after all, and however “Modernism” may make the origin of religion, or revelation,

non-intellectual, man *is* a reasoning animal ; and he is not content to rest in the vague stirrings of the religious sense. He ^{The} "Modernist" is obliged to give some account of ^{conception of} Development it, to interpret it, if even only for his own personal satisfaction.

What does he do, then ? He takes it as a datum of consciousness, and works upon it in his intellect, framing propositions as to its meaning. Thus he makes dogmas. It is clear that the statements and propositions made are no more, and can have no greater value, than any other purely human assertions. There is nothing divine in the normal working of the human reason. In the process of the manufacture of dogmas we have no more than reason manipulating certain data furnished by feeling. Dogma, consequently, in the teaching of "Modernism" is just worth so much as its expression of the religious feeling is adequate, and no more. It can be mistaken or false even, according to circumstances ; and every variation of religious experience,

as seized upon by the intellect, can be made the subject of fresh or new statements, or dogmas.

It follows that all dogma, as "Modernism" would have it, is changeable and provisional ; that its evolution, or development, is not from truth inclusive to truth included, from implicit to explicit statements, but from one inadequate expression of a truth to another equally inadequate, both being the expressions of the meaning of an irrational feeling of the heart. It follows also that, since revelation is supposed to be no more than the movement of the religious sense, none of its explanations on the part of reason can rise to the dignity of being religious truth. At most they are speculative assertions as to the something divine immanent in the heart.

And from these assertions, necessary in a sense to blind faith, other assertions take their rise, until there is a whole mass of statements, all hanging together as an account of the primitive heart-impulse. None of them

contain truth, or can adequately convey it from mind to mind. They are mere linguistic symbols, standing for religious experiences. In order that they should convey any meaning to the intelligence at all, it would seem that the heart must previously have had the experience that they symbolically embody.

No two systems, or explanations, of the same thing could be so diametrically opposed.

Fundamental opposition of Christianity and "Modernism" It is an abuse of language altogether preposterous to make words bear such opposed meanings. To speak of a revelation that is not a revelation is absurd. For a Catholic, remaining a Catholic, to do so, is disingenuous. Men have been called knaves before now for a less cause.

The comparison made so far, has been a striking one in showing how utterly incompatible is the teaching of "Modernism" with that of any Christian conception of revelation, and, particularly, with that of the Catholic Church. It works out in every

department of faith and doctrine, destroying all that Christians believe, on reasonable and credible grounds, with regard to God, Christ, and the Church. And at the same time, it works backwards towards the roots of all knowledge, even purely natural, withering them up with the outpourings of its radical scepticism.

It is not, as it has sometimes been said to be, no more than a system of apologetics,

Is "Modernism" merely a method of Apologetics? by which Christians may seek to convince unbelievers of the reasonableness of faith. Even

did it profess to be no more than this, it would be dangerous in the extreme; for it can convince no one of anything of the kind. To prove a thing reasonable, means to appeal to the common reason, not to intangible feelings that are of their nature personal and entirely subjective. But it is in reality more than a method of apologetics. It is, according to its own profession, a system not to be used only in

special cases, but always, and as a substitute for a discarded rational method. "Kant," says a writer in *The Times* of Monday, 25th November, "has nullified its *preambula fidei*." Concede that this magisterial statement, that has the characteristically audacious ring of "Modernism," is indeed true, cast aside the *preambula fidei* as worthless, and religion is no longer either reasonable or credible. No one but a hopeless pseudomystic, drunken with the excess of his imagination, would believe that it could appear to be so to reasonable men.

True mysticism is not irrational, neither does it deny what for most men is, and must always be, the only road to knowledge—the slow and solid plodding of right reason from facts to their meaning, from truth to truth.

"Modernism" So far we have spoken of outside the Church "Modernism" as if it were only —The "New Theology" a phase of thought that has developed itself inside the Catholic Church. As such it has been carefully analysed,

stated, and condemned in the recent Encyclical Letter of the Pope. But what makes it peculiarly welcome in certain non-Catholic quarters is the fact that, outside the Catholic Church, a similar school of thought has for some time been forming itself. This school, tentative so far in its methods and statement, proceeds upon parallel lines and by the use of similar methods. The "New Theology" of Mr Campbell and his adherents, with the exception, possibly, of its far more candid and outspoken statement of Pantheism, bears a remarkable likeness to Father Tyrrell's "Modernism." Mr Campbell is, perhaps, more far-sighted than Father Tyrrell, perhaps he is more honest, when he says that "there is no real distinction between humanity and God. Our being is the same as God's, although our consciousness of it is limited." Writing ostensibly for Catholics, it would have been imprudent for the ex-Jesuit to say what is logically contained in his thought, but what the pastor of the City Temple, with

less constraint, states straight out: "Jesus is the perfect expression of what humanity ought to be." "Every man is a potential Christ, or rather a manifestation of the Eternal Christ, that side of the nature of God from which all humanity has come forth." And so, in an altogether similar strain to that of "Modernism," the "New Theology" proclaims its belief in the Bible as a book, or collection of books, to be taken as containing records of religious experiences in the past, to be criticised, accepted, rejected, approved, condemned, just as any other religious experience that may take place in the present.

Such a position is to a very great extent understandable in the religious body to which Mr Campbell belongs. It is, in a very real sense, the last development of the principle of private judgment. It is the logical conclusion and outcome of Protestantism. But it is by no means a development of the principle of authority, as professed by Catholics;

nor is it, nor can it be, the logical conclusion of Catholicism.

There is certainly a tentative stretching forth of hands across the gulf between modern Protestantism and modern theories of science. Mr Campbell writes a “New Theology”; and Sir Oliver Lodge turns his versatile genius to the making of a “Catechism.” But if the gulf is to be filled up by rejected principles of religion, if revelation must go by the board, and Christ, and God, to provide material, then, even for Protestantism, it would be very much better if no such attempt were made.

Or, if faith in revelation has been given up, if the impetus of Protestantism has fizzled out in philosophical infidelity, in the name of truth, let us be honest and say so. Let us in common decency own up, without any twisting of old expressions of belief to new meanings, that religion, as it was understood, is played out; and that we are in search of something else to take its place.

It is a hard thing to understand how a man,
in other respects upright and sincere,
Hypocrisies can pledge himself to certain formularies when he disbelieves them. A clergyman taking upon himself the ministry of the Church of England binds himself to its formularies—to its Thirty-Nine Articles, its Creeds, its Book of Common Prayer. Do they all believe and honestly subscribe to the doctrines contained in them? Do not some interpret to suit their fancy or opinion, minimise, distort, wrest from the plain meaning of the words? Are there not clerics in the establishment who have “views” incompatible with their profession; who accept the Articles of Religion and deny them; who receive the Creed of St Athanasius and refuse to say it; who mouth the words of the Nicene Creed and deny the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection? How they can reconcile such appalling inconsistency with their consciences passes the comprehension of plain, ordinary men, who think them hypocrites and sneer at them.

No wonder the intelligent layman, for whom truth, even in matters of religion, is not yet a virtue, is driven farther and farther from such a Christianity.

Yet, perhaps, there is some excuse for them. There is no supreme authority to which they can have recourse for a definite interpretation of their meaning. Each must make up his mind for himself, in the supreme wisdom of his own private judgment, how he will or will not interpret the formularies he has subscribed, what he will, or will not hold. The only mystery is, how a man can say one thing and believe another.

The case is largely the same in the Non-conformist bodies, though the margin allowed for possible variations of opinion and dogmatic contradictions is less restricted by formularies than in the Anglican Church—unless there happen to be a trust-deed. But the mystery, though less, is of a similar character ; and the only possible excuse for those who profess one thing and, interpreting it to suit

their convenience, believe another, is the lack of any definite and received authority to which they can refer.

Far otherwise is it in the Catholic Church. Every aspirant to Holy Orders knows what that Church teaches and believes. Did he not know all, he certainly does know that there is a central and infallible authority to which he can have recourse for information on any dubious point. It is a condition of membership, let alone of stewardship, in that Church that all should accept the infallibility in matters of faith and morals of the supreme authority, and should, even when it is not exercised in its full power, receive its judgments with respect and dutiful assent.

The Catholic layman has no such excuse as may be found for the Protestant when he plays fast and loose with the truths of religion. Far less has the Catholic priest. There is no palliating circumstance to his dishonesty : and while he claims a place in the ministry, or even in the communion of the Church,

professing with one breath officially what he denies in the next personally, he is a monumental scandal to the truth and uprightness of human nature. How is it possible, it may well be asked, for a Catholic priest to stand at the altar and make the solemn profession of faith by which he asserts that the Lord Jesus Christ is “God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things are made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. . . . And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.” How can a man who contradicts, as being historically false, every one of these solemn statements, dare to utter “officially” such intolerable lies and blas-

phemies against what, for him, must seem to be the truth itself ?

One of the better known authors of "Modernist" literature in this country has cleverly seemed to evade the consequences of the "Modernist" principles by stating that "he would be a bold theologian who should affirm that such articles of belief as the Creation"—the Creed that he professed begins with "God, the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible"—"or as Christ's ascent into heaven, His descent into hell, His coming to judge the living and the dead, and many others, are held to-day in substantially the same theological sense as formerly. We may say that what we still hold is, *and therefore always was*, their substance, or essential value, purged of non-essential accidents. But these accidents were once held to be essential *sub anathemate*."¹

It is a sample of specious evasion. The

¹ The Rights and Limits of Theology: *Quarterly Review*, October, 1905.

Catholic Church has never yet withdrawn any single doctrine that she has once taught as of faith *sub anathemate*. If she had done so, she would certainly have forfeited any real claim upon our acceptance of all and every doctrine that she teaches.

And this the writer cited knows, or should know, full well. It is by a patent ambiguity—a double use of the term *sub anathemate*—that he is able to confuse his readers, and lead them to suppose that a dogmatic decision is of no more permanent value than a disciplinary enactment. The question at issue is not about non-essentials and accidents once held, under a disciplinary anathema, to be binding. When the discipline is relaxed, as it may be relaxed, *that* anathema is withdrawn.

It is a question of essentials and of doctrines. It is one of the plain meaning of words. Do we, or do we not, hold the truths stated as records of past, or prophetic announcements of future, facts? Do we, or do we not,

hold the doctrines conveyed to be true in the ordinary sense of the word ? Is the Man Christ indeed God of God, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, or not ? Did he become incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, or did He not ? Did He rise from the dead on the third day or not ? Will He come with glory as judge of living and dead, or will He not ? Did God create the world and all things visible and invisible—out of nothing, nor yet as an emanation, or development, or outgoing of Himself—or not ? These are the questions. No niggling as to essentials and non-essentials will put them aside. Nothing but a plain and honest answer will suffice.

If that answer be in the affirmative, if it be the ordinary profession of faith of the ordinary Christian, then, in the name of common-sense and reason let us have done with these learned dabblings in scepticism ! Why should anyone persist in writing of these momentous

subjects with a pen that seems constantly to betray him into maintaining the contrary of that which he is bound to uphold ? But if, on the other hand, the reply be negative, if a new and unorthodox interpretation of all these truths must be invented, because of some mental twist, or wry philosophy, if revelation and the truth of revelation cannot really be accepted as Christians have always received it, and as the Church has ever taught it, why not go out of her—as Luther did, and as Calvin did, and as many another unhappy one has done ? Why not be honest, and square belief with profession ? So that men may honour those with whom even they disagree. Men may pity those who err ; but they need not hate them as traitors. They will abominate the doctrines, but they will no longer hold the persons guilty of acting, even if not willingly professing, a lie.

Such, in brief, is the “Modernist” heresy, the synthesis, as Pius X. has aptly expressed

it, of all the heresies. One by one the venerable and hoary lies of antiquity find, for a space, new life in this travesty of religion. Pelagianism—the invention of one Morgan, a Welshman—is scrawled over the whole of its theology. Arius starts to life again, for a space, in the person of the teachers of the “historic Christ,” the Priscillianists, in that of the asserters of the “Christ of faith.” One by one the bloodless ghosts of half-forgotten heresies leave their tombs to parade in the vague and unreal atmosphere of “Modernism.”

And then Pius X. speaks. The whole Catholic world listens with unfeigned relief, and assents, with a whole-hearted abandon, to his teaching. They had been awaiting it, confident that the Apostolic voice would be heard above the clamour and jargon of the innovators.

What has been the effect of the Encyclical? It has let loose the pent-up sentiment of Catholics. For its defence of Revelation, of

the Bible, of Christ, it has found a warm welcome even in non-Catholic quarters. In Catholic magazines and periodicals theologians are busy upon it, analysing, illustrating, exemplifying. The best talent of Catholicity is employed in diffusing its teaching ; and all, from highest to lowest, are thanking God for the timely pronouncement on a question of the deepest importance.

A few stand aloof, saying nothing—a very few. One or two at most, of the two hundred and fifty millions odd, resentfully oppose it. And the spectacle of those one or two is neither edifying nor inspiring.

It is sad beyond measure to contemplate their attitude. In some respects, did it not move us to pity or excite our choler, it would be ludicrous in the extreme. But the effect of that position, in itself an outrage upon common-sense and common honesty, is remarkable ; and notably so in England. The Encyclical *Pascendi Gregis*, and the previous decree *Lamentabili sane*, warned Catholics,

without a doubt, of the danger in their midst. Some there were who, without much depth of philosophy or understanding of the issue of the theories of "Modernism," were coqueting with it as fashionable, up-to-date, "the thing." More even than the Papal utterance, the undignified position taken up by one or two of the more advanced "Modernists," and by one in particular, has emphasised the extremely dangerous temper and tendency of their doctrines, and sent those who might otherwise have been suspected of "Modernist" leanings straight back to orthodoxy. The menace of "Modernism" was grave, none the less so that the evil was an insidious one. It called for strong and plain speaking. No one can complain that Pius X., to whose care, as far as the Catholic Church is concerned at least, the issue was committed, has spoken with a faltering or uncertain voice.

WHY “MODERNISM” HAS BEEN CONDEMNED

IN view of what has already been said it would hardly appear necessary to allude further to the reasons that have necessitated the condemnation of “Modernism.” Nevertheless, for the sake of clearness, we may again set down briefly the principal ones.

1. “Modernism,” by doing away with the rational foundations of all religious faith, destroys the possibility of all religion, natural or revealed.
2. It denies the fact of external revelation —*i.e.* that God has spoken or communicated truth to man, in the form of a truth-message from without.

3. It makes of what was formerly reckoned to be the truth taught by God no more than the speculative description of feelings experienced by men.
4. It, consequently, rejects the Bible as a collection of documents having any historical value when they relate supernatural or miraculous events.
5. It teaches that Christ, as a historic personage, was a man and not God ; that the Godhead in Him was recognised by “ faith ” as akin to itself ; that He was not always aware of the fact that He was God, even by the experiences of His religious sense ; that He was ignorant of His mediatorial character.
6. It refuses permanence to the dogmas of faith, as not coming from God, but from men : it interprets those dogmas, as the expressions of mere subjective experience, in the light of further subjective experience.

7. It recognises no Church founded by Christ Himself in person : but one grown up by force of circumstances to band together a number of individuals possessing in common similar religious experiences.
8. It, as a consequence, subverts the constitution of the Church, teaching that authority comes from below and not from above, from the people who compose it, and not from God.
9. It rejects the doctrine that the sacraments (as instruments conveying grace) were instituted by Christ personally.
10. It is based upon a philosophical theory of sensationalism or scepticism (Agnosticism), that is subversive of all knowledge of ultimate reality, natural or divine : and it takes refuge in a Pragmatism to cover its non-rational character.

And all these points, selected as the most striking out of many, are in direct opposition to the teaching of Christianity. For this reason, and on these considerations, there was no other possible course open to the Catholic Church as the guardian of revelation and custodian of a divine trust, than to condemn it officially. Already reprobated by the consciences of the faithful, the tendencies, teachings, and logical conclusions of "Modernism" were included in the sixty-five condemned propositions of the Decree *Lamentabili sane* (3rd July 1907); and again, presented in the form of a definite and related system, in the Encyclical *Pascendi Gregis* (8th September 1907), the whole "Modernist" heresy was finally anathematised.

APPENDIX OF QUOTATIONS FROM “MODERNIST” WRITINGS

WHAT has been put forward in the foregoing pages as the doctrine and implications of “Modernism” and compared with the teaching of the Catholic Church, has been gathered from the Encyclical *Pascendi Gregis* itself, and from the writings of certain “Modernists.”

It would scarcely be credible that such opinions should be held by those who call themselves Christians, were it not that Christian laymen, and even priests, have made themselves responsible for them.

Thus the Encyclical, which paints the “Modernist” in colours absolutely revolting to a Catholic, is approved by an English

exponent of “Modernism” in the following terms :—

“ By far the greater part of this lengthy document is occupied with a controversial exposition of ‘Modernism’ from the pen of some subtle scholastic theologian unusually well versed in the literature of his subject, which, however, he criticises entirely in the light of his own categories. Were this not evident, one would sometimes be tempted to think he might be a traitor in the orthodox camp. For the picture he draws of ‘Modernism’ is so seductive to an educated mind, and the counterpart he suggests so repellent, as to make the Encyclical rather ‘dangerous’ reading for the children of the world.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL, *The Times*, Monday, 30th September 1907.)

We are, consequently, led to suppose that the English high oracle of “Modernism” at any rate—and he ought to know—is entirely satisfied with the exposition of

“Modernist” doctrines on the part of the “subtle scholastic theologian.” We might, he blandly explains, almost think him a “Modernist,” so well is he versed in the literature of the subject.

This is as it should be ; and is peculiarly helpful in the present case, since to bring together a list of statements from “Modernist” writings to exemplify their teaching is not the easiest of tasks. The “Modernist,” is nothing if he is not elusive. He possesses the characteristic that Tertullian noted against heretics generally in a remarkable degree. And it is almost as unsatisfactory to pursue the will-o’-the-wisp of his genius through his voluminous writings as to get him to admit anything definite at all. We shall be accused of unfairness if we quote without context, and, at the same time, we shall be rather understating the case than otherwise in doing so. Yet there is nothing else to be done ; and the quotations that we give must be taken and read in the light of the Rev. George

Tyrrell's admissions as to the accuracy of the interpretation of "Modernism" generally as given in the Encyclical. They are nearly all taken, for the sake of brevity, from three works—"L'Évangile et l'Église" (by the Abbé Loisy); "Autour d'un Petit Livre" (by the same); and "Through Scylla and Charybdis" (by the Rev. George Tyrrell).

REVELATION

"The conceptions that the Church presents as revealed dogmas are not truths fallen down from heaven and preserved by religious tradition in the precise form in which they first appear. The historian sees in them the interpretation of religious facts acquired by laborious effort of theological thought. Though the dogmas may be divine in origin and substance, they are human in structure and composition." (LOISY: "The Gospel and the Church," translated by Christopher Home, pp. 210-11.)

“There can be no possible conflict (between faith and science),” writes the “Modernist,” Dr ERNEST ENGELS; “not, as is sometimes implied, because they are harmonious and complementary parts of the same thought world, whose coherence can be obscured only by ignorance; but because they belong to different worlds altogether, and can no more clash than history and poetry can clash. It is only the expression of religion, its utterance and embodiment in the forms of the understanding, that is exposed to such conflict; just as the poet’s science and facts may be exploded to the disembodiment but not to the destruction of his sentiment.” (“Religion as a Factor of Life,” p. 35.)

“If it (Christianity) was not (and it was far from being) the chance product of a combination of heterogeneous beliefs, from Chaldea, Egypt, Persia, and Greece: if it was born of the incomparable word and action of Jesus, it is none the less true that Jesus gathered up and vivified the best of the

religious wealth amassed by Israel before Him, and that He transmitted this wealth, not as a simple deposit that the faithful of all time had to guard, but as a living faith in the form of a collection of beliefs, which had to live and grow after Him, even as they had grown and lived before, by the preponderating influence of the spirit that animated them.” (Loisy: “The Gospel of the Church,” translated by Christopher Home, pp. 137-8.)

“ All revelation truly such is in some measure or other an expression of the divine mind in man, of the spirit of God ; but it is not necessarily a divine expression of that spirit ; for the expression is but the reaction, spontaneous or reflex, of the human mind to God’s touch felt within the heart, and this reaction is characterised wholly by the ideas, forms, and images wherewith the mind is stocked in each particular case.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: “The Rights and Limits of Theology”: *Quarterly Review*, October 1905, reprinted in “Scylla and Charybdis,” p. 208.)

“Analogous to the first rude efforts at physical science there are, among the earliest types of humanity, childish strivings after some sort of religious philosophy which are simply a product of natural reason, of reflection on observation, and are in no sense spontaneous creations of the religious spirit. On the other hand, there are revelations in the true sense ; picturings of the other world given by, in, and along with religious experience, though expressed with all the crudeness of those uncultured minds from which they spontaneously spring, and to whose compatriots they are addressed.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : “Scylla and Charybdis,” p. 278.)

“Knowledge, then, is used in a very different sense of experience and of reflection on experience, of presentation and of representation. It is used in an equally different sense of revelation and of theology.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : “Scylla and Charybdis,” p. 282.)

“Our religious experience, being the sense

of the dynamic relationship obtaining between our spirit and the Universal Spirit, affords us a practical criterion in virtue of which we can set aside any theory inconsistent with such experiences." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 230.)

In a similar spirit, the Rev. HASTINGS RASHDALE, in a sermon preached at St Peter's, Bayswater, distinguishes between the essentials of Christian religion and the accretionary doctrines grown up about them. "In modern language," he says, "I think we may say that we adhere to the three great essentials of the Christian religion--belief in a personal God, in a personal immortality, and (while not limiting the idea of revelation to the Old and New Testaments) in a unique and paramount revelation of God in the historic Christ." ("Christus in Ecclesia," p. 335.)

Further, the French Protestant, Sabatier, may be quoted, as summing up the "Modernistic" idea of revelation in its origin.

“ There are then not only two moments in the religious phenomenon : the objective revelation as cause, and the subjective piety as effect ; there are three which succeed each other always in the same order : the interior revelation of God, which produces the subjective piety of man, which, in its turn, brings forth the historical religious forms. Let us then take the internal emotion, no matter how its origin be explained, as the first vital and organic point (*nœud*), as the principle from which we must set out to follow up the development of the whole religious life.”
(SABATIER : “ Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion,” p. 268.)

HOLY SCRIPTURE

“ It need only be added that this inevitable or legitimate idealisation of Christ, arising spontaneously in the Christian consciousness, and not by the aid of rigorous observation and methodical reflection, must have affected, to a certain extent, the form of legendary

development, though actually it is nothing but an expansion of faith, and an attempt, though an insufficient one, to set Jesus on the height that is His rightful place.” (LOISY : “The Gospel and the Church,” translated by C. Home, p. 41.)

“Thus, little by little, there is formed in the atmosphere of faith, beyond what can be called the historical reality of the Gospel, beyond even its idealisation to suit the Messiah, the dogma which aims at determining its providential meaning, its universal scope, its transcendent efficacy.” (LOISY : “The Gospel and the Church,” translated by C. Home, p. 46.)

“It is true, however, that these narratives (of the birth of Jesus) represent a normal development of the history of Christ. The very nature of their subject, the critical examination of the two versions taken separately or compared, and an analysis of evangelical tradition, make it impossible to regard them as a definite expression of historical memories :

none the less they are put forward as a document of Christian faith, and in this capacity attract the attention of the historian. (LOISY : “The Gospel and the Church,” translated by C. Home, p. 49.)

“Even the Bible, which is sometimes opposed to tradition as ‘the pure word of God,’ is after all the voice of the Church of many generations—of God speaking in and through the religious experience of successive multitudes under all the limitations of their mentality and language.” (REV. GEORGE TYRRELL : “Scylla and Charybdis,” p. 66.)

“It is no longer difficult for us to believe that ‘no man has seen God at any time, seen Him, that is, as something external and apart from the world and humanity; or that no man has heard God at any time calling out from the clouds, or from the burning bush, or from the summit of Sinai. . . . For now we have learned to seek Him where alone He is to be found, and seen, and heard; near,

and not far ; within, and not without ; in the very heart of His Creation, in the centre of man's spirit, in the life of each ; still more in the life of all." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 366.)

[The dogma of the resurrection] "does not convey an idea to me. But, on the contrary, it excludes certain ideas that I might be tempted to adopt. Death did not put an end to the action of Jesus upon the things of this world : He mixes with and lives among us, and not only as a thinker who has disappeared, whose influence remains fruitful and perennial, and whose work produces consequences for a great while ; He is, to the very letter, our contemporary : In short, death was not for Him what it is for ordinary men—a positive cessation of practical activity. That is what the dogma of the resurrection teaches us. . . . And so 'Jesus is risen' means : 'Be in those relations with Him that you would have been in before His death, as you are in face of your contem-

poraries.'”—EDOUARD LE ROY, “Qu'est-ce un Dogme,” *Quinzaine*, 16 Avril 1905.

“We do not worship Humanity, with the Comtists, but we worship the Power that is revealed in human goodness of every sort. In this sense Humanity, so far as it stands for the just, the noble, the brave, and the true, for those who in any way have crucified, sacrificed, limited themselves for the love of God and for the sake of His Kingdom and of their fellow men, is a mystical Christ, a collective Logos, a Word or Manifestation of the Father; and every member of that society is in his measure a Christ or revealer in whom God is made flesh and dwells in our midst.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: “A Much-Abused Letter,” p. 72.)

CHRIST

[See also above, under Holy Scripture, Revelation.]

“The ‘Lord Christ’ glorified in the resurrection is the object of the Christian faith,

as the Christ pre-existing ‘in the form of God.’ Jesus of Nazareth is the preacher and thaumaturge who was known to all the world.” (LOISY: “*Autour d’un Petit Livre*,” p. 112.)

“. . . progressively, but beginning at a very early date, the Greek interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the Messiah came into being through the spontaneous effort of the faith to define itself, through the natural exigencies of propagandism, and thus the Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, predestined Saviour, became the Word made Flesh, the Revealer of God to humanity.” (LOISY: “*L’Évangile et l’Église*.”)

We may notice, in passing, that Mr Campbell, who hails the “Modernists” as kindred spirits to the “New Theologians,” is more explicit though he really goes no step further, when he says :

“We deny nothing about Him (Jesus) that Christian devotion has ever affirmed; but we

affirm the same things of humanity as a whole in a differing degree. . . . Briefly summed up, the position is as follows: Jesus was God, but so are we. He was of God because His life was the expression of Divine love; we too, are one with God in so far as our lives express the same thing. Jesus was not God in the sense that He possessed an infinite consciousness; no more are we. Jesus expressed fully and completely, in so far as a finite consciousness ever could, that aspect of the nature of God which we call the Eternal Son, or Christ, or ideal Man. . . . We are expressions of the same primordial being. Fundamentally, we are all one in this Eternal Christ." (Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL: "The New Theology," p. 94.)

CHURCH AND SACRAMENTS

"It is certain, for instance, that Jesus did not systematise beforehand the constitution of the Church as that of a government

established on earth and destined to endure for a long series of centuries." (LOISY: "The Gospel and the Church," translated by Christopher Home, p. 166.)

"On the other hand, what is so often used as a reproach against Catholicism—its various affinities with non-Christian religions, with Judaism, and Græco-Roman, or Egyptian paganism, and all their tributaries—seems to us one of its principal glories and commendations. We like to feel the sap of this great tree of life in our veins welling up from the hidden roots of humanity. To feel so, to possess this sense of solidarity with all the religions of the world; to acknowledge that they are all lit, however dimly, by the same Logos-light which struggles, unconquered, with even their thickest darkness—*this is to be a Catholic.*" (REV. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 23.)

"As for its paganism, it is undeniable that in its generic aspect as a religion, one of the great religions of the world, Catholicism is

older than Christ ; as old as humanity itself ; as old as speech and language." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 44.)

"Catholicism is but the most fully developed branch of a tree that springs from the very roots of humanity, and bears traces and proofs of its kinship with every other branch of the religious process." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 47.)

"It is all-important . . . to distinguish the pre-constitutional formless Church from the governmental form which it has elaborated for its own apostolic needs." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL : "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 49.)

"The systematised conception of a plan of worship ordained by Jesus himself before His Passion in which the seven sacraments would have had their determined place, with an indication of what scholastic theology has called their matter and form, cannot withstand criticism." (LOISY : "Autour d'un Petit Livre," p. 254.)

"If, then, there is one thing clear, it is that

the general idea of the institution of the sacraments, as it is taught in the decrees of the Council of Trent, is not a historic account of what Jesus did nor the Apostolic Church thought, but an authentic interpretation, I may say authorised for faith, of the traditional fact." (LOISY: "Autour d'un Petit Livre," p. 256.)

"Chief among these effective symbols of unity are those seven sacraments which have come down to us practically from the beginning, and are accepted *semper, ubique, ab omnibus.*" (REV. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 43.)

AUTHORITY

"... This essay maintains that all authority, civil and ecclesiastical, comes to rulers and bishops directly from God or from Christ; but from God or Christ as immanent in the community, according to the teaching of St Paul and the Gospels." (REV. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 360.)

“Authority is something inherent in, and inalienable from, that multitude itself; it is the moral coerciveness of the Divine Spirit of Truth and Righteousness immanent in the whole, dominant over its several parts and members; it is the imperativeness of the collective conscience.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: “*Scylla and Charybdis*,” p. 370.)

“Need I waste a paragraph to explain that by democracy I do not mean the subjection of the clergy to the laity; of the few to the many; but of clergy and laity alike to the whole body which exists logically prior to any such division; to that formless Church, to whose service the hierarchic institution is but instrumental, from which its authority is derived, to which it is responsible, by which it is reformable.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: “*Scylla and Charybdis*,” p. 384.)

LIBERAL THEOLOGY

“The old is continually being swallowed up by, and forgotten in, the new. This must hold good of theology, if it is to be a true,

living, and fruitful science. But it cannot possibly hold good of it if theology is bound to unalterable revelation and dogma as to an inherent part of itself, and not merely as to its subject-matter." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 13.)

"Nor does the liberal theologian ask or care that his theology be substantially identical with that of the past, but only that it be truer to experience than that which it supersedes." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 136.)

[Liberal theology] "deals with those ever-present evidences of God in Nature and in the universal religious experiences of mankind which are accessible to all, at all times, and by which all theories and doctrines as to the origin, nature, and end of these experiences can be experimentally tested." (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 114.)

"Not necessarily denying, but putting aside all belief in the miraculous and the supernatural, liberal theology works out the consequences of modern scientific presuppositions and critical methods as applied to the religion

of mankind. Christianity is usually viewed by it as the so-far highest and fullest development of the religious spirit; but Christ's revelation was but one of many that have been and may yet be. It was a great stride forward, but how many greater may remain to be made?" (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: "Scylla and Charybdis," p. 129.)

No wonder the Protestant prophet of the "New Theology," the Rev. R. J. Campbell of the City Temple, was able to write, in all truth, the following words:—

"Up to the present the name New Theology seems to have been restricted for the most part to the teaching given from some Evangelical Free Church pulpits, especially of the Congregational order. There is no absolute reason why it should be so, or perhaps the tendency will not continue; for the same movement exists in other Churches, even the Roman Catholic, and is rising spontaneously everywhere. . . . There is no Church where this movement is more marked at present than in the venerable Church of Rome herself, the Mother Church of Western Christen-

dom." (Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1907.)

Lastly, we may quote, as a sort of brief general summary of "Modernism," the following:

"But to come to the more concrete and practical ; putting aside all theological problems, you will still allow that for you the Crucifix represents the highest ideal of life ; that Jesus stands for the most perfect type of humanity *in individuo* ; that He is the central and supereminent figure round whose Cross are gathered the Christs of all ages, races, religions, and degrees. . . ." [The writer obviously is arguing a case *ad hominem* ; but, when he proceeds to apply the point of argument, its disingenuousness is apparent. Thus—]

"Dogma apart, and taken at its lowest, the Eucharist remains for you the sacrament of communion and incorporation with that mystical 'Christ-Crucified' ; an act by which you offer yourself to be received into that divine company or spiritual organism. . . .

"Again in the Eucharistic chalice, mingled with the blood of Christ, you can still see the

blood (that is, the sufferings, pains, and self-sacrifices) of all God's victims from the beginning. . . .

“When you hear Mass you can still do so with a desire and intention of uniting your life in self-sacrifice with this endless, world-wide self-sacrifice of the mystical Christ for the same ends in the same spirit.

“And if your conscience is seriously troubled, and you feel that you have cut yourself off from the spiritual unity of this mystical Christ, there is no reason why you should not still see in the Sacrament of Penance a means of reconciliation.” (Rev. GEORGE TYRRELL: “A Much-Abused Letter,” pp.84-5.)

This the advice of the writer to one troubled with doubts, but who, as a Catholic at least, was bound to believe

- (1) That Christ is God, and Christ, of men, alone.
- (2) That the Eucharist is a Sacrament, instituted by Him, and that therein are truly, really, and substantially present, His very flesh and His very blood.
- (3) That the Mass is the unbloody con-

tinuation of the Sacrifice of Calvary, one and the same Sacrifice with that of the Cross.

(4) That Penance is a Sacrament, instituted by Christ, as a means for the forgiveness, by God, through the ministry of His priests, of post-baptismal sin.

No wonder, when we find such playing fast and loose with language, as that indulged in by “Modernism”—and, above all, with the most solemn of all thoughts that can be enshrined in language, with the great truths of revealed religion—we find also so strong a protest as that made by the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal* against the unreality of theological professions.

“Whatever may be the case with the virtues in general, there is one pre-eminent virtue which no longer finds its severest field of exercise in the determination of religious belief. I refer to the intellectual virtue of veracity. A strict regard for veracity, in its simplest and most intelligible form, has become the mark—should I not say the glory?

—of physical science. On the other hand, the impression has gone abroad that religious belief is a kind of doctrine which men may hold, not because they can prove it to be true, but for other reasons—whether good or bad is not now the question. Certainly the disposition is growing to appeal to anything rather than demonstrated truth in support of doctrine. In consequence of this habit the Churches are becoming the home, almost the refuge, of an order of minds intellectually content to hold beliefs for which the evidence, when judged by the severe standards of science, is insufficient. In the handling of theological formulas, loose thinking is no longer recognised, as once it was, and let us hope will again be, as the one supremely fatal vice. Pausing to weigh my words, and keeping back the strongest terms that might be used, I cannot withhold the opinion that there is not, and never has been, any department of serious human concern in which loose thinking has attained the proportion and enjoys the privilege which now belongs to it in the public exposition of religious belief. By a convenient fiction we treat the public as ‘sick of dogma.’

But even if this description were true, as it certainly is not, we must not infer that the public is hungry for the products of irrational sentiment or slovenly thought. . . . If by dogma is meant a reasoned statement of religious belief backed by the authority of demonstrable truth, I say deliberately that there is nothing for which thinking men are so eagerly in search.

“In this respect theology has fallen below the level of her own former practice. The framers of the Creeds understood at least that the function of formula is to formulate. With them theology was no science of variable meanings. Their work declares what *must* be believed, and declares it for no other reason than that it seemed to them to be and to remain eternally true. Guarded at every point from the risk of misconception, and elaborated to a finish which leaves no detail incomplete, the Creeds, of which the Athanasian is here the finest example, rise before us like moated citadels built out of the chosen stone of the quarry, whose rigid outlines time itself could never soften. If there is any attitude of mind which stands condemned by the

spirit of such work, it is that which would admit variety of interpretation as to what the Creeds may mean. This was the very thing which the Creeds were created to prevent. But all has changed. . . . Language, when applied to the expression of religious belief, seems to have a different set of values from those carried in other departments of thought. Elsewhere words are supposed to convey something: here they may convey almost anything. Not only has it become impossible to say what a particular dogma means, but highly difficult what it does not mean; for there is hardly a conceivable meaning which ingenuity may not contrive to fix on the words. What would happen, we may well ask, if a witness in a Court of Law were to indulge in the irresponsible use of language which is now tolerated in many of the high places of religion?" (*Hibbert Journal*, October 1906.)

It is not consoling to think that human nature is capable of such an abuse of language and of truth. At least the Catholic Church will have none of it.

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